

## EDITORIAL

With Hartley Coles



# Acton the poorer

Recently two well known Actonites passed away. Both were members of families who have lived in Acton for generations. Both were unique individuals who touched the lives of those around them. Both were called Tom.

Tom Watson, member of a prominent Acton family, active in politics, his church, former businessman, WWII veteran and family man, died after severe complications from an operation developed.

A former trustee with the old Acton school board and with its successor, the Halton Board of Education, Tom was a leading figure in having the "new" Acton high school built off Churchill Road. For many years, with his wife Renee, he operated the restaurant on Mill Street now known as Andy's. It was not only a place to dine but was also a social centre. The clientele came from all walks of life and encouraged by Tom, who had strong opinions on many facets of life, discussed everything from politics to religion.

He took up the torch from his father Perry, who operated a dairy and dairy bar in the store now occupied by Al's barber shop on Main Street before buying the restaurant on Mill Street from Tony Seynuck. Tom's mother Isabel Watson was also known to thousands of Actonites, not only for her work as the town librarian for decades, but also assisting in the restaurant.

Tom and his family have been prominent members of Knox Church and active in many areas of community life. We join with many others in expressing our condolences to Renee and the family.

The other Tom who left this life recently, was Thos Gibbons, scion of a family which has been in Acton and area since well back in the last century. Thos, as he was known, was one of those modest people who form the backbone of our community. He was a faithful member of St. Joseph's Church, a son of the late Tommy Gibbons who served on Acton Council for many years.

Thos always supported activities in Acton from sports to social events. He took an active interest in the history of Acton, collecting pictures of those early days. Thos' brothers Neil and Frank Gibbons were well known athletes on Acton hockey and baseball teams in the '20s and '30s. His sister, known as "Dean" was the head nurse at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto before coming back to Acton to serve in this town's drug stores. Her experience and advice were sought by many people.

Thos was the last of the Gibbons family to reside in Acton, ending a span which reaches back at least 150 years. Thos will be missed along with his cheery greeting.

Acton is the poorer for losing these two residents. May they rest in peace.

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Death affects people in different ways, and children may often be the hardest hit. Not only have they lost someone they have cared about, they may not understand some of the details surrounding the situation.

The students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett recently lost their valued and well-liked educational assistant, Mrs. Valerie deBraub.

To show their respect for her, the entire student body formed a single line along the length of the school property last Thursday morning as Mrs. deBraub's procession drove by. Before it arrived, the students were acting as children do - talking and laughing with each other.

As the hearse turned onto Acton Boulevard, the entire group fell silent. All eyes were glued to the car and you could feel in the air the heaviness of sorrow.

They may not understand what was happening, but they knew they were feeling a loss - for their teacher, for their friend.

The teachers at McKenzie-Smith Bennett should be proud of their students - just as Mrs. deBraub would have been.

WHAT --  
ME WORRY?



Cowan Reker © 1996 Tanner

### It's a Mad world!

Rob Heaton has frustrated fellow councillors recently with his behaviour at meetings, and while he's always meant for interesting copy, we have to side with critics who have blasted Heaton

for being counter-productive.

Heaton's actions as Ward 2 rep are funded by local taxpayers, and we believe that the citizens footing the bill would be disturbed, in the least, by the wasting of time at recent council meetings!

- Editor

### Your LETTERS

#### 'Winning' season

To the Editor,

The Acton Indoor Soccer League would like to take this opportunity to thank *The Tanner* for their support and coverage of the events of our past season.

Our league is in its third year and growing fast. The first season, we combined our efforts with Georgetown. In the second year we had

three teams of each: junior girls, senior girls, boys and adults. This year we expanded to Minis, four teams of Juniors, six of Seniors and four Adult teams. We are looking forward to a great outdoor season followed by more indoor soccer in the fall.

Congratulations to all our indoor soccer players. You have had a great season. We are looking forward to seeing you all soon, outdoors!

Thank you players, parents, coaches and referee staff, without whom this season would not have been possible. You are all winners in our books.

Indoor Soccer Committee  
Acton Soccer Club

#### Trustee speaks out

To the Editor,

Last Wednesday I attended the spring concert at Pineview School. It was simply a delightful treat. On Saturday evening I attended the most amazing performance of *The Little Shop of Horrors* at Acton High School. These are shining examples of school staff and communities working together with children.

Needless to say, these two events were the highlights of my week. After reading the weekend edition of a Georgetown paper on Saturday, and after much reflection, I realize that rather than to dwell on the power struggles at the Board table, I must continue to focus on kids, schools and the communities I represent.

The budget process was long and difficult. I had hundreds of calls and letters from people not wanting to cut programs or services to children. I heard from only four callers who demanded a zero per cent mill rate increase.

In the end it was not a perfect budget, but I do think it provided a reasonable balance. During the process, I put forward amendments to the budget which represent annualized savings of approx. \$1 million. Had all of these passed, certainly it would have nudged us closer to a zero per cent mill rate increase.

The accusations made by some trustees, as reported by the newspa-

per, clearly aim to undermine my integrity and my ability to represent you as your trustee. This is not about conflict of interest - rather it is about the ongoing conflict at the Halton Board of Education. It's about power and politics rather than about education and children.

My daughter is a teacher with the Board, therefore under the Conflict of Interest Act (1972) it is my duty to refrain from discussion or voting on any issue regarding compensation. Diligently and truthfully I carried out that duty. Having done that, and having obtained a personal legal opinion, I voted on the final budget, as did several other trustees who declared conflicts throughout the budget process.

This is hardly a precedent setting position for a trustee to take. Past practice at the Halton Board, and in other Ontario Boards, demonstrates that when a trustee declares a conflict of interest during the budget process, it is not only the right, but the responsibility of a trustee to vote on the final budget. No case law exists to dispute this.

My interest in being a trustee is not about power or politics. It's about bringing the reality of the North to the Board table and about commitment to your children. I will continue to work toward that end.

Ethel Gardiner, trustee  
Halton Board of Education

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